

SCOTLAND'S STORY

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**Declaration
that shouts
for freedom**

**Peace tests
Bruce's will**

**The Scots
who invaded
Ireland**

**Survival time
on the land**

**Soccer legend
built triumph
from tragedy**



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ATLANTIC
OCEAN

1315

The Bruces invade Ireland. Edward Bruce leads the expedition. King Robert joins him for a spell in 1317.



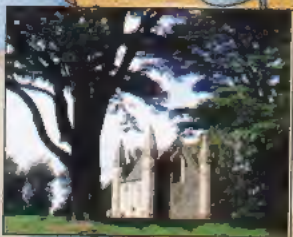
1318

October 14: Edward Bruce is killed in battle at Dundalk, during the ill-fated invasion of Ireland by the Scots



1318

December: The Scots Parliament sits at Scone, and re-introduces military feudalism



1320

April 6: Signing of the Declaration of Arbroath: "As long as 100 of us remain alive ..."



1322

Bruce invades England, and inflicts another decisive defeat on Edward II.



1327

Edward II is deposed giving Bruce fresh opportunities to invade.



1326

Renewal of the Auld Alliance at Corbeil. It was first forged in 1295.



1328

The English finally recognise Scottish Independence, and Bruce's kingship.



1329

June 7: Bruce dies at his Cardross home, ravaged by leprosy. He is 55.



**In Part 13:
The Stewarts
found a dynasty**

PART OF
IRELAND

North
Channel

PART OF
ENGLAND



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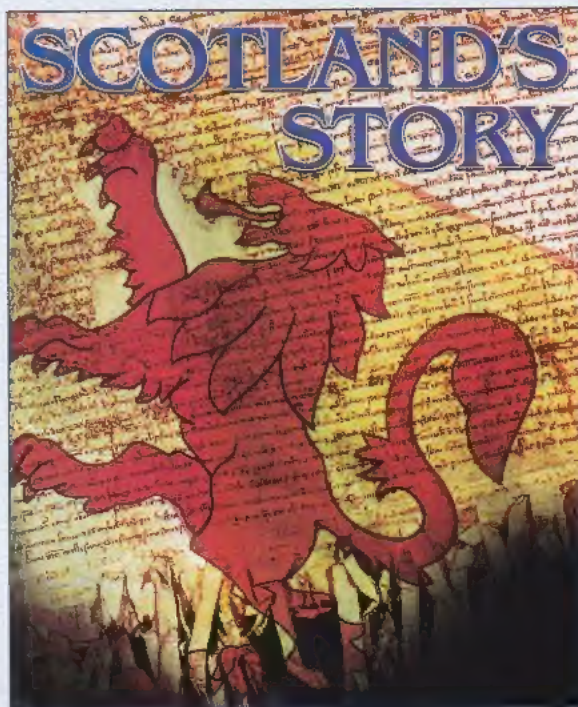
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COMMENT



COVER:
Symbols of nationhood. The historic Declaration of Arbroath is the backdrop to Scotland's Lion Rampant.

Giving voice to freedom's call

If Bannockburn was the defining moment in Scottish history, Arbroath gave it shape and substance.

The inspiring text of the Declaration of Arbroath stands unequalled as a statement of nationhood.

It can still make the hackles rise and the heart beat faster, almost seven centuries later.

Who could fail to be moved by the power of emotion captured so eloquently?

"For as long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will never on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. We fight not for glory, nor riches, nor honours, but for freedom alone, which no good man gives up except with his life."

A battle cry for a nation if ever there was one.

The years after Bannockburn were far from easy for Bruce despite the rout of the English army. Edward II survived to fight another day, which meant an uphill battle to safeguard Scotland's independence.

An even bigger challenge was to re-unite the kingdom, and here Bruce showed his skill as a

diplomat. He rewarded those whose support had been crucial in the years before Bannockburn. Even those who had opposed him were welcomed back and retained their lands if they swore allegiance.

But he remained ruthless towards those who opposed him, or undermined his country's new-found freedom. Winning recognition for the nation was a long hard haul.

Eventually in 1328, the mix of diplomacy and relentless raids on the North of England paid off.

Bruce's reputation in later ages emphasised his courage, magnanimity, compassion and fairness. His role as saviour of an independent Scottish nation can hardly be exaggerated,

There is something reassuring about seeing history repeat itself. The chroniclers of the 14th and 15th centuries found many aspects of Bruce's life less than inspiring. So they air-brushed history.

They played down Bruce's early support of Edward I, blackened the name of the man he killed, and generally improved his image.

Oh, yes... so what else is new in politics?

The kingly calm after the storm



■ More of a monarch than a warrior. The time had come for Robert Bruce to be a businesslike king and mend broken fences.



■ Scone saw the restatement of Scots law in 1318, while – despite Bannockburn – pressure had to be maintained on the English King Edward II (right) to secure an honourable and statesmanlike peace.

When the sound of battle had subsided Robert Bruce began to concern himself with restoring the business of monarchy

The 15 years of royal government which remained to Bruce after Bannockburn were dominated by two fundamentally important aims. At home, the king strove to restore the kingdom as it had been before 1286, in Alexander III's 'golden days'.

That meant healing the deep wounds in the Scottish body politic caused by the contest between Balliol and Bruce for the Scottish throne.

Beyond Scotland's borders the king must obtain recognition of his title, and of the independence of his kingdom, from England and the Papacy. Important but incidental themes were the relations between Scotland and Ireland and the resumption of full-scale trade between Scotland and the commercial-industrial centres – whether French, Flemish, Dutch or Hanseatic – on the North Sea and Baltic coasts.

Surviving records demonstrate the importance and relative peacefulness of the years from 1314 to 1329. Only 39 documents which bear (or have borne) the king's seal are preserved from the years 1306-14, as against 377 extant for the remainder of the reign.

Much of this record shows the king pursuing a policy of reconciliation. He rewarded individuals and families whose support and loyalty in the hectic years before Bannockburn were crucially important.

But he was also prepared to overlook past

disloyalty if men and women were ready to come in out of the cold and serve him faithfully thenceforward. Some prominent families, such as the Comyns of Badenoch and Buchan, or the main Balliol line, were irreconcilable and lost their large estates.

But even families as hostile to Bruce as the Macdougalls of Lorn were not driven out so thoroughly that they could not make a comeback in the next reign, and well before King Robert's death many who had fought against him between 1306 and 1314 had been reconciled and had their lands restored. In particular it is noticeable that the king preserved the old pattern of earldoms, even if the families who held them might here and there be changed.

It is indeed striking to see how little feudal landholding as a whole in Scotland between the 1280s and the 1320s seems to have been altered in any important sense. Alongside conservation in his relations with the nobles Bruce displayed conservatism towards the law and its administration.

The Scone parliament of December, 1318, put forward a restatement rather than a wholesale reform of Scots law.

The general effect of this legislation is to re-establish what was understood to have been the law of Alexander III's reign. Most striking of all was the apparent revival of military feudalism in the terms on which tenants-in-chief were to hold their lands of the crown.

Bannockburn was decisive in the sense that it proved that England could not conquer Scotland by a military campaign. But because Edward II escaped capture, the Scots had to maintain constant pressure on the English to secure an honourable and statesmanlike peace.

They raided the northern counties of England year after year, suffering relatively few casualties and profiting greatly from booty and ransoms.

An invasion of Ireland proved a failure and it ▶



Ridiculing the young Plantagenet might not have been so wise...

► was necessary to redouble the campaigning effort in the north of England. This at least led to the recovery of Berwick upon Tweed in April, 1318, an event followed by a massive Scottish raid into north Yorkshire.

The warfare of 1317-19 took place in defiance of papal prohibition, for Pope John XXII wished England to be free to contribute to a crusade against the Turks. Robert I had therefore to mount an exceptionally powerful propaganda response to explain to the Papacy that the Scottish cause was just.

In the spring of 1320 it was decided that the king, the bishops, and the nobles (in conjunction with lesser freeholders, the whole group styling itself the 'community of the realm') should all send letters to the Pope to put the case for Scottish independence as forcefully as possible.

Only the nobles' letter survives, famous as the 'Declaration of Arbroath'.

If the king's letter and that of the higher clergy were in the same vein and as eloquently argued, the Pope should have been profoundly moved. Nevertheless, papal recognition did not immediately follow, although the Pope's tone changed and a truce for 13 years was agreed in 1323. A year later Pope John at last yielded to Scottish representations and recognised Robert I's credentials as independent king of Scots.

The 13-year truce had come about in response to a major invasion of England in autumn 1322. This was probably the closest the Scots ever came in Bruce's time to a full-scale military expedition against their southern neighbours.

A large army, the main part of which would have consisted of war-toughened veterans riding sturdy hill ponies ('hobelins'), but which also included a contingent of unmounted Highlanders and Islesmen, swept south into Yorkshire and nearly captured the English king. They fought, and with the help of the agile Highlanders won, a dramatic battle at the top of the steep Sutton Bank (Roulston Scar) and made several distinguished nobles and knights prisoner.

Edward II's reputation, already damaged by Bannockburn, suffered a severe blow in the Scottish invasion of 1322. It was his political downfall in 1326-7 which opened the way for a settlement of the Anglo-Scottish quarrel. Almost as soon as Edward II had been deposed (on January 20, 1327) the Scots, in defiance of the



■ Where the heart of Bruce is believed to be buried in a recently-renewed casket: Melrose Abbey.

truce, attacked Norham Castle on the Tweed.

In June Bruce's two most trusted commanders – Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray (King Robert's nephew) and James Douglas – took a small but formidable force into northern England. The 15-year-old Edward III was brought to the Pennine dales to be 'leader' of the army which would teach the Scots a lesson. Instead, the Scots made a fool of him by first of all nearly capturing him in his tent and then disappearing altogether.

Ridiculing the young Plantagenet may have been unwise, for the cruelties which Edward III later inflicted on Scotland were possibly motivated by a desire for revenge.

Serious peace negotiations began in the autumn and the formal treaty was made at Edinburgh,

March 17, 1328, ratified by the English parliament at Northampton on May 4. By its terms the English recognised the status of Scotland as an independent kingdom and Robert I's title as rightful king.

Edward III's sister Joan was to be married to Robert I's son David (the marriage was in fact solemnised in July, 1328, although the parties were mere children. The two kingdoms would be bound by a military alliance, saving to the Scots their special treaty with France, which dated from 1295 and had been renewed at Corbeil in 1326.

To secure this peace in perpetuity, King Robert was willing to pay £20,000 to the English government. The money was duly paid within three years. Less than two years later, the English

THE REAL BRAVE

When King Robert Bruce lay seriously ill and dying in 1329, he knew that he could never fulfil his vow to go on crusade. So he wrote a deathbed letter ordering that his heart be cut out and taken to the Holy Land.

Later that year Bruce's friend and lieutenant, Sir James Douglas, set off for Jerusalem with a Scottish contingent to fight the Moors in Spain, carrying the casket by his side.

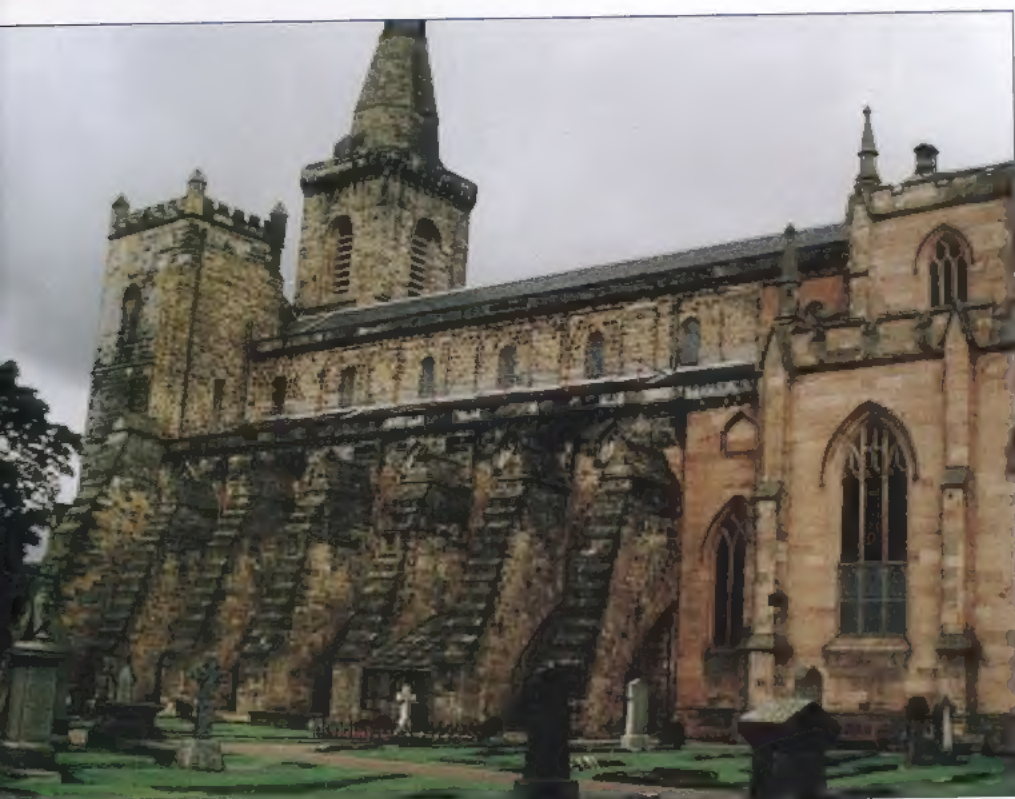
In 1330, on their way through Spain, the crusaders were confronted by a much bigger force of Moors. Douglas immediately decided to fight, hurling Bruce's heart into the enemy ranks with the words: "Lead on brave heart, I'll follow thee." Then he and

his men charged into the Moors – and death.

The next day another Scottish knight, Sir William Keith, found the casket under a pile of bodies and brought it home to Melrose Abbey, where it was buried.

Three years ago a cone-shaped lead container was discovered under the floor of the abbey's chapter house during an archaeological dig.

It was examined by a team of experts from Historic Scotland. After drilling tiny holes in the lead and inserting a fibre-optic cable to look inside, they opened the lead container. Inside they found a smaller, cone-shaped casket – believed to date from 1329. They also discovered a copper



■ Where the body of Bruce – without his heart – is definitely buried: Dunfermline Abbey.

repudiated the Treaty of Edinburgh and their king launched another attempt at conquest. Long before that had happened, Robert Bruce died (June 7, 1329) at his house at Cardross beside Dumbarton, at the age of 55. Even for a member of a warrior aristocracy he had led a life of extreme strenuousness and physical hardship.

For many years before his death he had suffered from a severe disease which was almost certainly leprosy. He was buried at Dunfermline Abbey with all solemnity, his heart being removed from his body and carried to southern Spain by James Douglas, to be borne in battle against the Muslims of Granada.

Douglas was killed, but the king's heart was brought back to Scotland and buried at Melrose

Abbey. Bruce's reputation in later ages emphasised his courage, magnanimity, compassion and fairness in his dealings with friend and foe.

His role as saviour of an independent Scottish nation can hardly be exaggerated, even though he built on the achievement of Wallace and was helped by the weakness of Edward II.

Compared with many later Scottish kings, Bruce emerges clearly as a king for the whole country, personally familiar with almost all its regions and attracting devoted followers from all the airts, from Lowlands and Highlands alike.

His choice of Cardross as the place of his retirement – on the Highland line, close to Glasgow and Strathclyde, within easy sailing reach of Arran, Cowal, Kintyre and Knapdale – may be seen to epitomise his essential Scottishness. ●

TIMELINE

1318

Edward Bruce is killed at Dundalk, in Ireland. The Scots retake Berwick and invade Yorkshire.

1320

The Declaration of Arbroath is followed by a plot to murder Bruce.

1322

Scots are victorious at the battle of Sutton Bank and nearly capture Edward II.

1323

A 13-year truce is agreed between Bruce and Edward II.

1324

The Pope acknowledges Robert Bruce's right to the throne.

1328

Edward III recognises Bruce and his heirs as Kings of Scots.

1329

Bruce dies at Cardross near Dumbarton and is buried at Dunfermline.

1330

Sir James Douglas dies fighting Moors in Spain while taking Bruce's heart on crusade. The heart is recovered and returned to Scotland for burial at Melrose Abbey.

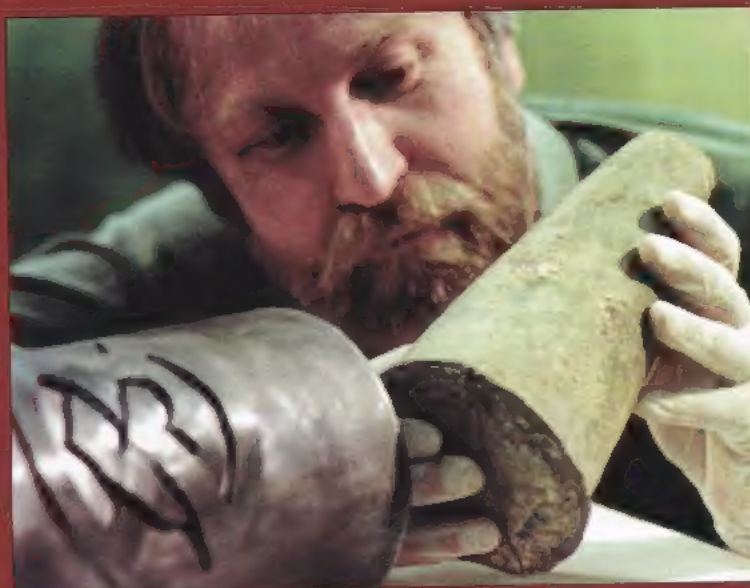
HEART

plaque, saying a casket "containing a heart" had been dug up and reburied.

The Historic Scotland team decided against opening the Medieval casket and so could not confirm absolutely that it did indeed contain the heart of Bruce.

Mrs Doreen Grove, an inspector of ancient monuments, said: "We have no comparative match to carry out a DNA test and I don't think we can justify invading this relic again."

The casket was placed inside a new lead container and on June 24, 1998 – exactly 684 years after the victory at Bannockburn – it was reburied during a private ceremony at Melrose Abbey. A plaque now marks the spot where it lies.



■ Richard Welander, of Historic Scotland, places the lead cone – believed to contain Bruce's heart – into a new casket before it was reburied at Melrose Abbey.



■ Invasion force: Veterans of the recent triumph at Bannockburn moved into Ireland under the leadership of Robert Bruce's brother Edward.

Struggle that raged across the Irish Sea

What were the Bruce brothers' motives in mounting an invasion of colonised Ireland? The answer is hard to find, especially as the invasion was to be a largely futile exercise

In the early summer of 1315 a fleet-load of Scottish veterans from the recent great victory at Bannockburn put ashore on the coast of County Antrim. They were led by the only surviving brother of Robert Bruce, Edward, recently ratified as heir-presumptive to the Scottish throne.

It was a major expedition, planned well in advance, and although Scotland was then in the middle of a life-and-death struggle with England, for the next three-and-a-half years a very significant proportion of her hard-pressed resources was devoted to it.

Edward Bruce adopted the title 'king of Ireland', and was supported by some important Irish kings, principally Donnall O' Neill of Tir Eogain (Tyrone). Edward set up his own administration in Ireland to replace that of the English colony based in Dublin, and until his death in 1318 he sought to make his new kingdom a reality and to bring English rule in Ireland to an end.

One of the great question-marks which has hung over the Scots invasion of Ireland ever since

is this... Did Bruce really hope to turn the invasion into a permanent conquest, or was he just trying to exploit Irish dissidence to force the weak king of England, Edward II, to concede his claim to be king of Scots?

Many suggestions have been put forward through the ages. Some say Bruce's aim was simply to rid himself of a troublesome younger brother, but the problem with this theory is that the brothers seem to have been on good terms and indeed Robert later came over to Ireland himself to help Edward out.

Others have said that Edward was sent to try to cripple Ireland as a source of supply to the English, but that hardly necessitated a full-scale invasion. Anyway, since the Scots themselves were used to obtaining supplies from Ireland, their scorched-earth policy involved cutting off their nose to spite their face.

Another suggestion is that Bruce wanted to create a diversion for Edward II by opening up a second front and splitting the English forces.

Again, though, this doesn't make much strategic sense, since his own forces were being



■ Carrickfergus Castle on the Antrim coast, near the Scots' landing point.



■ Carlingford Castle, Dundalk, close to where Edward Bruce died.

split as much as, if not more than, those of the English. Perhaps the most sensible view is that the Bruces were keeping their options open.

Contemporaries believed that the Irish sought the help of Edward and Robert Bruce to free them from English rule, and maybe the Bruce brothers felt it was worth the investment.

At the very least, an Irish revolt would indeed distract the English war-effort, and might even encourage the recently-conquered Welsh to join in. And if the gamble paid off, the Bruces would end up ruling not one kingdom but two.

But why Ireland? Right from the moment when he seized the Scottish throne, Robert Bruce showed an interest in enlisting Irish support. He probably spent the winter of 1306-7 on Rathlin island off the Antrim coast, and sent a letter to the Irish stating that they and the Scots 'stem from one seed of birth', have 'a common language and common custom', and proposed 'permanently strengthening and maintaining inviolate the special friendship between us and

you, so that with God's will our nation may be able to recover her ancient liberty'.

Here he speaks of the Scots and Irish as a single nation, and this lies at the core of their plan for Ireland. The events of 1315-18 were a Scottish attempt to win support for their struggle with England by exploiting similar sentiments elsewhere. Such sentiments lay in Ireland, and also in Wales. A contemporary English source says of Bruce's invasion of Ireland that 'there was a rumour that if he achieved his wish there, he would at once cross to Wales, and raise the Welsh likewise against our king. For these two races are easily roused to rebellion; they bear hardly the yoke of slavery, and curse the lordship of the English'.

However, apart from the odd raid on Anglesey, there was no large-scale Welsh invasion. The reason for this is that the attempted conquest of Ireland got bogged down. The Bruces did have Irish support, and their arrival caused uprisings to break out all over the country, but they found

it impossible to make that final push needed to overturn English rule, even after Edward was joined in Ireland by King Robert in the winter of 1316-17. They failed for a number of reasons.

The Bruce occupation of Ireland coincided with one of the worst famines to inflict Europe in the Middle Ages. For many, no doubt, political considerations came second to survival.

It is also true that the Scots did not get sufficient support. Some of the Anglo-Irish colonists swapped sides during the invasion and joined the Scots, but most stayed loyal. And what Bruce needed was not just to defeat them – which he did in several battles – but to get them to join him.

Without that, with just the support of the native Irish rebels, the long-term prospects were poor. However, even among the native Irish, support for Bruce was not universal. The political divisions in Gaelic Ireland were such that Bruce's support was limited to those who acknowledged Domnall O' Neill's supremacy. So, in practice O' Neill's allies were Bruce's allies and O' Neill's enemies were Bruce's enemies. And that is why, when Anglo-Irish colonists killed Edward himself in the battle of Fochart, just north of Dundalk, on 14 October, 1318, the new Scottish kingdom of Ireland died with him.

The invasion did, however, have long-term consequences. It wreaked a great deal of destruction throughout Ireland. There were parts of the country which provided taxes and rents for the government before the invasion but from which it never again drew revenue in the Medieval period.

As a direct result of the Bruce invasion, therefore, the area of Ireland under the effective control of the Dublin government shrank.

It also profoundly shifted the balance of power in Ireland. O' Neill's plan of enlisting Scottish support may have backfired, but ultimately his dynasty won out, and soon the O' Neills re-emerged as the dominant force in Ulster and indeed throughout Gaelic Ireland.

It was a status won with Scottish support – and maintained with Scottish support in one form or another for centuries to come – until the bloody collapse of the Gaelic order in Ireland in 1603. ●



■ Was Wales in the Scots' masterplan? The occasional raid on Anglesey, above, suggests that it was.

As long as 100 of us remain alive...

The Declaration of Arbroath promotes crucial ideas – not least that the king is answerable to his subjects. But it did not make an instant impression on the Pope



Why should a letter written to Pope John XXII by the nobles, barons, freeholders and the 'community of the realm of Scotland' now be regarded as such a significant document? What is so special about it? Ideas are elusive, especially those of the Medieval variety. Indeed, in looking at the past it is often difficult to determine how people thought, what they thought about, and to learn something of their beliefs and attitudes.

The Arbroath letter enshrines some crucial ideas which, through time, Scots would take for granted. It reflects a vital moment in the formation of Scottish identity. It was propaganda designed by priestly spin doctors to put the best possible interpretation of the Scottish case - namely the legitimacy of Robert Bruce's claim to be king of Scots. It employed a high-flown style of rhetoric, intended to divert the Pope from his dozing as he listened to dozens of such petitions in a day. It may have been slightly deceptive and it may have bent the truth a little, but it was magnificent.

We are not even sure that it was subscribed at Arbroath Abbey, and the date - April 6 - is surely bogus. But Abbot Bernard, chancellor of Scotland, had his headquarters there. He was a poet who wrote about freedom and although we cannot be sure, it looks as if he was responsible for other documents issued from the Bruce chancery. These were all intended to stress the treacherous behaviour of the English and the subsequent suffering of their victims, hitherto unconquered peoples.

Bruce was not Pope John's favourite person. John blamed him for infringing truces and thus prolonging the wars to the detriment of Papal plans for a campaign against Islam, which appeared to threaten the very survival of Christendom.

In 1317 two papal negotiators arrived in Scotland to broker a truce with the 'Governor of Scotland' Bruce, however, would have nothing to do with people who would not recognise his kingly title.

The letter the Pope John XXII begins by rehearsing the history of the Scots who, according to legend, originated near the Black Sea, then travelled through the Mediterranean to Gibraltar and Spain. About 1,200 years after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea the Scots settled in their own 'Promised Land', having expelled the Britons and destroyed the Picts. This new 'chosen people', for such is what the terminology implies, valiantly defended themselves against Vikings and English and lived in freedom under 113 kings, 'the line unbroken by a single foreigner'.

Although they dwelt 'in the uttermost ends of the earth', Christ, after the resurrection, showed the Scots special favour by converting them, 'almost the first to his most holy faith' through the auspices of St Andrew, brother of Peter. The Scots loved to stress this last point because it was Andrew who first met the Messiah and by informing Peter of this portentous development he became the first missionary. Without Andrew there might have been no Peter - and so no Pope.

Specially favoured as it was, the Scottish nation lived in peace until treacherously betrayed by Edward I, who visited countless atrocities upon the kingdom. The Scots had been rescued from their misery and thralldom by Robert Bruce, another Maccabeus or Joshua, upon whom kingship



■ Arbroath Abbey: It was probably here that Abbot Bernard conceived the Declaration.

had been conferred by God, right of succession, and the consent and assent of his subjects.

Yet the document goes on to say that if this paragon should ever give up what he has begun, *'seeking to make us or our kingdom subject to the king of England or to the English, we would strive at once to drive him out as our enemy and make some other man who was able to defend us our king'*.

It need hardly be stated that this was pure bluff, intended to demonstrate the intensity of Scottish feeling since there was not the remotest chance that Bruce would ever submit to English dominion.

However, in this passage we have the earliest articulation in European history of the idea that the king is answerable to his subjects, that he is governed by the kingdom's laws like everybody else and that, just as a king is elected, so he can be deposed. Such notions were truly revolutionary in 1320 but they were also inspirational.

'For as long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will never on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. For we fight not for glory, nor riches, nor honours, but for freedom alone which no good man gives up except with his life'.

The signatories then proceeded to the nub of their argument, begging the Pope to look with paternal eyes on the calamities the English had brought upon the Scottish nation and intervene with Edward II *'to leave in peace us Scots, who live in this poor little Scotland, beyond which there is no dwelling place at all'*.

By facilitating peace Pope John would free up resources for crusades to the Holy Land. On the other hand, if he did not heed their petition, as the Scots provocatively told him, he would be responsible for the death and suffering which would follow if the wars were prolonged.

The Pope replied before the end of the year, but his letter showed that the Scots remained out of favour and that he was unmoved by their rhetoric. There is some indication that Edward II, possibly fearing a favourable response to Scottish overtures, considered some peace initiatives of his own, but

in fact a truce was not established until 1323. The Arbroath initiative therefore achieved little in the short term. Nor should the Declaration be seen as a grand unifying document which bound the nobility and barons of Scotland in a nationalist manifesto. Within months, three of the signatories had been condemned for treason. One died before trial but his corpse was required to appear for sentence. The plot is obscure but it seems that some who were sympathetic to the old Balliol faction wished to supplant Bruce as king. They failed, but it is worth noting that there was still serious opposition to Bruce among his own countrymen six years after Bannockburn.

Is it possible that the conspirators were inspired by the language of the Arbroath letter? Most commentators have attributed the passage on Bruce's potential deposition to expedient rhetoric, but he was doubtless aware that those who lived by the sword were likely to die by it.

In moving against Edward I in 1306 Bruce was also usurping the kingship of Balliol who, in Medieval parlance, was regarded as the 'useless king' who had to go. But there were still those who regarded him as Scotland's legitimate ruler. Bruce therefore had to manufacture a theory to justify his own action, while at the same time condemning Edward I for exactly the same thing, namely the usurpation of the Scottish kingship.

Those accused of opposing Bruce in 1320 suffered the same grim fate as Wallace - they were hung, drawn and quartered.

April 6, the anniversary of the Declaration, has been adopted as 'Tartan Day' by the US Senate and a number of Canadian provinces. The name may be unfortunate but the day represents an annual opportunity to celebrate the Scots belief in freedom, the contractual theory of monarchy and resistance to tyranny. These ideas became central to Scottish political thinking and were often invoked in future centuries. As enshrined and articulated in the Arbroath letter, they represent the greatest legacy of Robert Bruce. ●

Freedom's cry: the full text of the Declaration

A letter from the Scottish Magnates to Pope John XXII. Arbroath Abbey, 6 April, 1320. The original is pictured right

Most holy father and lord, we know, and we gather from the deeds and books of the ancients, that among other distinguished nations, our own nation, namely of Scots, has been marked by many distinctions. It journeyed from the Greater Scythia by the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and dwelt for a long span of time in Spain among the most savage peoples, but nowhere could it be subjugated by any people, however barbarous. From there it came 1,200 years after the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea and, having first driven out the Britons and altogether destroyed the Picts it acquired, with many victories and untold efforts, the places which it now holds, although often assailed by Norwegians, Danes and English. As the histories of old times bear witness, it has held them free of all servitude ever since.

In their kingdom 113 kings of their own royal stock have reigned, the line unbroken by a single foreigner. Their high qualities and merits, if they were not otherwise manifest, shine out sufficiently from this: that the King of kings and Lord of lords, our lord Jesus Christ, after His passion and resurrection called them, even though settled in the uttermost ends of the earth, almost the first to His most holy faith. Nor did He wish to confirm them in that faith by anyone but by the first apostle by calling, namely the most gentle Andrew, the blessed Peter's brother whom He wished to protect them as their patron for ever.

The most holy fathers your predecessors gave careful heed to these things and strengthened this same kingdom and people, as being the special charge of the blessed Peter's brother by many favours and numerous privileges. Thus our people under their protection did heretofore live in freedom and peace until that mighty prince Edward, king of the English, father of the present one, when our kingdom had no head and our people harboured no malice or treachery and were then unused to wars or attacks, came in the guise of friend and ally to invade them as an enemy.

His wrongs, killings, violence, pillage, arson, imprisonments of prelates, burning down of monasteries, despoiling and killing of religious, and yet other innumerable outrages, sparing neither sex nor age, religion nor order, no-one could fully describe or fully understand unless experience had taught him. But from these countless evils we have been set free, by

the help of Him whom, though He afflicts yet heals and restores, by our more valiant prince, king and lord, the lord Robert, who, that his people and heritage might be delivered out of the hands of enemies, bore cheerfully toil and fatigue, hunger and danger, like another Maccabeus or Joshua. Divine providence, the succession to his right according to our laws and customs which we shall maintain to the death, and the due consent and assent of us all have made him our prince and king. We are bound to him for the maintaining of our freedom both by his rights and merits, as to him by whom salvation has been wrought unto our people, and by him, come what may, we mean to stand. Yet if he should give up what he has begun, seeking to make us or our kingdom subject to the king of England or to the English, we would strive at once to drive him out as our enemy and a subverter of his own right and ours, and we would make some other man who was able to defend us our king. For as long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will never on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. For we fight not for glory nor riches nor honours, but for freedom alone, which no good man gives up except with his life.

Therefore it is, reverend father and lord, that we beseech your holiness with our most earnest prayers and suppliant hearts, that, recalling with a sincere heart and pious mind that, since with Him whose vice-regent on earth you are there is neither weighing nor distinction of Jew and Greek, Scotsman or Englishman, you will look with paternal eyes on the troubles and anxieties brought by the English upon us and upon the church of God; that you will deign to admonish and exhort the king of the English, who ought to be satisfied with what he has, since England used to be enough for seven kings or more, to leave in peace us Scots, who live in this poor little Scotland, beyond which there is no dwelling place at all, and who desire nothing but our own. We are

willing to discharge fully to him (due regard having been paid to our standing) whatever will bring about peace for us. It truly concerns you to do this, holy father, who sees the savagery of the heathen raging against Christians, as the sins of Christians have indeed deserved, and the frontiers of the Christians being pressed inward day by day; and you must see how much it will tarnish the memory of your holiness if (God forbid it) the church suffers eclipse or scandal in any branch of it during your time. Then rouse the Christian princes who for false reasons pretend that they cannot go to the help of the Holy Land because of wars they have with their neighbours.

The truer reason that prevents them is that in warring on their smaller neighbours they anticipate a readier return and weaker resistance. But He from whom nothing is hidden well knows how cheerfully we and our lord the king would go there if the king of the English would leave us in peace. We profess and testify this to you as the vicar of Christ and to all Christendom.

But if your holiness, giving too much credence to the tales of the English, will not give sincere belief to all this, nor refrain from favouring them to our confusion, then the slaughter of bodies, the perdition of souls, and all the other misfortunes that will follow, inflicted by them on us and by us on them, will, we believe, be imputed by the Most High to you. Therefore we are and will be ready, and in these (letters) we are bound, to obey you as His vicar in all things as obedient sons; to Him as supreme king and judge we commit the maintenance of our cause, casting our cares upon Him and firmly trusting that he will inspire courage in us and bring our enemies to nothing.

May the Most High preserve you to His holy church, in holiness and health for many days to come. Given at the monastery of Arbroath in Scotland, on the sixth day of the month of April in the year of grace 1320 and the 15th year of the reign of our aforesaid king.



Who was where as the seals were set



■ Avignon, site of the papal court, to which a Scottish knight delivered the Declaration.

It seemed like a solid band of nobles who put their names to the Declaration backing Bruce. But some were plotters and doubters

Who were the 40 people who put their seals to the Declaration of Arbroath to convince Pope John XXII that Robert Bruce was their rightful king?

Some were Bruce supporters who had benefited from their loyalty to his cause in lands and titles. Nobles like Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray, Walter Stewart, the Steward of Scotland, Robert Keith, marischal of Scotland; James, lord of Douglas, the famous 'Good Sir James', and Gilbert Hay, of Errol in Perthshire

Gaeldom, too, lent its support. Bruce in his hour of darkness had fled to the Celtic west where the MacDonalds sheltered him – and it is interesting to note, in the light of later history, that the the Campbells were Bruce's kin. Donald Campbell is listed, and his brother Neil, who had fought for Bruce since 1306, had married the king's sister Mary.

Others were more reluctant converts to Bruce – particularly those on the front line between Scotland and England in East Lothian where diplomatic skill counted more than patriotism.

Alexander Seton, of Seton in East Lothian, had been captured after the battle of Methven and remained in English allegiance until the eve of Bannockburn – when he deserted and brought Bruce news of low English morale. Bruce rewarded him with lands around Tranent. Patrick Dunbar, Earl of

March, a descendant of the Angle kings of Northumbria, frequently changed allegiance. His lands around Dunbar in East Lothian were plundered by Bruce and the English. Yet in 1314 Bruce confirmed his earldom, bringing him into allegiance. It was one of Patrick's knights, Sir Adam Gordon, who took the Declaration to Pope

John XXII at Avignon, in France.

Some Scots could never sign the Declaration. They were the disinherited the Balliols and their Comyn supporters. But some were forcibly brought into the Bruce fold and joined the Declaration that justified Bruce's usurpation.

William Leslie, Earl of Ross, had been a Balliol guardian north of the Spey but was brought to Bruce's side after Ross was invaded in 1307. William Oliphant was possibly the son of the keeper of Perth who held the town against Bruce. He, too, was granted lands by Bruce.

Some converts became active supporters. Duncan MacDuff, Earl of Fife, changed sides in 1314. Along with William Sinclair, Bishop of Dunkeld, he repelled an English invasion of Fife in 1317. The bishop's elder brother, Henry Sinclair of Roslin, assented to the Declaration and his son died taking Bruce's heart to the Holy Land.

The father and mother of Malise, Earl of Strathearn, were staunchly anti-Bruce. When Bruce threatened the father with death, he is reputed to have said his oath to Edward "isn't fragile like a glass". He lost his earldom but Malise backed Bruce, so that when Edward Balliol invaded in 1333 he forfeited the young earl.

Malise's mother Agnes, Countess of Strathearn, was a daughter of Alexander Comyn of Badenoch. Deprived with her husband in 1313, she couldn't be reconciled to Robert I. Indeed, she along with five other Balliol supporters of the Declaration participated in the Soules plot to murder Robert Bruce.

The plot's name comes from one of its chief conspirators, William Soules, butler of Scotland, son of a former guardian of Scotland and a Comyn mother. Soules had strong pro-Balliol connections, as did all the plotters, and they probably aimed to restore the Balliols to power.

Its secrecy was compromised, however, and retribution was swift. William, along with Agnes of Strathearn, were sentenced

to 'perpetual imprisonment' in Dunbarton Castle.

The betrayer was Murdoch Menteith, a relative of Sir John Menteith – the infamous 'false Menteith' who had betrayed Wallace and nonetheless put his seal to the Arbroath Declaration. For Murdoch's second Menteith betrayal Bruce gave him an earldom.

Other names on the Declaration had differing levels of involvement.

Ingram Umfraville had opposed Bruce since Comyn's murder, even fighting for the English at Bannockburn. He knew of the conspiracy but it was not for him as he went into exile in France.

Patrick Graham of Invernesshire and Eustace Maxwell of the Borders, were suspected but found innocent. David Wemyss was possibly imprisoned for his part and Roger Mowbray may have been the dead body at the trial.

David, Lord of Brechin, seems to have been most implicated in the plot. He had ever-shifting allegiances. Despite being captured by Bruce at Brechin in 1308, he was holding Berwick for Edward II a few years later – until he was captured by Bruce again when he sailed to Dundee.

By 1320 Brechin was once again in Bruce's court... deciding that the king's murder was an acceptable solution.

Brechin can be seen as an unreliable character who easily traded his allegiances, but he was relatively steadfast in his opposition to Bruce except when in his custody. Perhaps, though, Brechin had had enough and the assassination of Bruce, from his point of view, would have solved everything. We will never know.

Found guilty, Brechin was executed in a way designed to humiliate traitors drawn through the streets and beheaded.

Whatever their political outlook, most Scottish nobles found the text of the Declaration something to which they could give their assent. Even if their deeds fell below its honourable sentiments. ●

■ Receiver of the letter from the Scots' Pope John XXII



The spin doctors who polished hero's image

History has been kind to Robert Bruce - but then again it was his side who recorded it

■ A scene from one of Scotland's most famous books - the *Scotichronicon*. This 15th century historical masterpiece was written by Walter Bower.



Robert Bruce's reputation as a patriot king is fully justified. He risked everything in his struggle to become king of an independent Scotland. And, against immense odds, he was successful - not only against the might of England but against most of the Scottish nobility, led by the Comyn family.

There has been a natural tendency to view the Comyns and their allies as traitors, and imagine that Robert Bruce and his family were stalwart patriots.

But the situation was very different before Robert Bruce seized the throne. From the very beginning of Edward I's attempt to gain sovereignty over Scotland it was the Comyns and their friend, John Balliol, who held out for Scottish independence.

In January, 1302, it looked as if Balliol - who everyone except the Bruces recognised as king - would return. This prompted Robert Bruce to join Edward I.

These awkward facts posed a problem for Scottish chroniclers writing half a century or more after the events.

When the first chronicle was written in 1363 Robert Bruce's son David II was king. By the 1440s, when the next

major chronicle was written, Scotland was ruled by the Stewart dynasty, who were descended from Bruce's daughter.

How could these chroniclers deal with the fact that the Bruces were often on the 'wrong' side before 1306?

They could hardly expect David II and the Stewart kings to congratulate them for revealing these skeletons in the cupboard.

You might expect that the chroniclers would suppress the facts. And they did.

But they could not suppress all the facts. Some were too well known just to be air brushed out of history.

If you study the chronicles you can see that it took as long as 150 years to make the story begin to fit the notion that Bruces were always patriots and their foes, the Comyns and John Balliol, were pro-English traitors.

The most brazen rewriting of history was the account of Edward I's first assertion of sovereignty over Scotland.

In May, 1291, Edward I was asked to

decide who should be next king of Scots: John Balliol or Robert Bruce, the grandfather of the patriot king.

But Edward added to the confusion by encouraging lots of no-hopers to claim the throne. He then demanded that all the claimants pay him homage and recognise English sovereignty.

Who held out against Edward I? Not Robert Bruce, the elder. He was among the first to go on his knees before the

English king. No, the last to bow to the inevitable was John Balliol and his Comyn allies. There was then a lengthy court case presided over by Edward I to judge who should be king.

At the end it was clear that John Balliol was going to win. But Robert Bruce the elder was determined to gain something.

He urged Edward I to divide Scotland between himself, Balliol, and another claimant. Thankfully, Edward I rejected this idea, otherwise Scotland would have disappeared from history.

None of this was mentioned in the

If Edward had accepted old Bruce's idea, Scotland would not exist today

chronicles. Instead the truth was turned upside down.

The chronicles said that it was Bruce who looked likely to win the crown. They then told a remarkable story about how Edward blocked Bruce because he resisted Edward's claim to homage!

Edward, according to the story, interviewed Bruce and Balliol in turn, asking them if they would submit to English sovereignty.

Bruce replied with stirring patriotism that Scotland had always been free, and that if he could not gain the throne lawfully, he would not give away Scottish independence to Edward as the price for becoming king.

Balliol, it was asserted, was only too keen to surrender Scottish freedom for the crown!

These lies were possible because the truth about Balliol's patriotism and Bruce's double-dealing in 1291-2 occurred during complex political and legal manoeuvring – which must have been difficult to follow at the time, let alone remember generations later.

Some deeds were too obvious to be tidied away completely by false stories. On 10 February, 1306, Robert Bruce, the future king, met

John Comyn, in Blackfriars Church in Dumfries.

Their discussions came to an abrupt end when Bruce knifed Comyn, who died. Bruce's murder of his enemy in the sanctuary of a church was regarded as an abominable crime.

Bruce did not try to deny that he had committed this dreadful deed, and sought absolution. The chroniclers, again, were less than honest. They could not deny that Bruce had knifed Comyn. But they did their best to limit Bruce's blame and find excuses for the deed.

They made out that Comyn was a traitor who had intended to betray a pact he had made with Bruce. The details of this supposed pact are the stuff of fantasy. Bruce, we are told, was going to surrender all his lands to Comyn if he supported Bruce's attempt to win Scottish freedom.

This is the same Bruce who sided with Edward I in 1302 because he feared he would lose his family estates if Balliol returned from exile.

Another tactic was to pretend that Bruce did not actually kill Comyn, but only wounded him. There is good evidence that Comyn was, indeed, killed in two stages. This was elaborated by Scottish chroniclers more than a century later to lessen Bruce's guilt.

Bruce is said to have attacked Comyn in the heat of the moment, and then

fallen into a state of shock because he was so appalled at what he had done.

His friends then misinterpreted the situation and returned to kill Comyn.

The blackening of Comyn's reputation was not an easy task. He it was, with the opportunist Simon Fraser, who won one of Scotland's least-known victories against the English.

This was the battle of Roslin in 1303, when Comyn and Fraser led a raid against English forces based in Edinburgh. The commander of English forces in Scotland was captured, and the English treasurer was killed. It was a dramatic achievement. The victory at Roslin showed that there was some fight left in the cause of Scottish independence.

But when the Bruce and Stewart chroniclers wrote about this battle they had a problem. It is obvious that the victory at Roslin was already celebrated in a dramatic account which told how the Scots, inspired by Comyn and Fraser, withstood wave after wave of English attacks, despite being heavily outnumbered and utterly exhausted.

This story made sure the victory remained famous, and preserved the memory of John Comyn as a determined patriot, not a cowardly traitor. What were the chroniclers to do about this? It was important for them, after all, to blacken Comyn's reputation because he was Bruce's foe.

They were caught in two minds. They could not ignore Comyn's glory, because it was too well known. But they did not want to pass up the chance of telling the story of such a great victory.

As a result the chronicles were quite inconsistent in how they treated Comyn. As late as the 1440s chronicles were telling both of Comyn's bravery at Roslin as well as his supposed treachery which had been invented to excuse Bruce for knifing him.

It was not until the 1460s that an attempt was made to play down Comyn's role in the battle of Roslin. It was not denied that Comyn led the Scots, but instead of saying that Comyn and Fraser inspired the weary Scots to feats of bravery, it was claimed that the Scots owed their victory to the aid of St Andrew and their desire for freedom.

Should we blame the chroniclers for playing around with the truth? Their job was to make the past something comfortable and inspiring for Scots to read about.

Nobody expected them to tell the awkward, naked truth of the dirty deeds of war. ●

Comyn led the struggle against the English yet they claimed he was a traitor

£1 a year to write a Scots masterpiece

John Barbour was the 14th century poetic churchman who created *The Bruce*, a masterpiece of Scottish literature. One of the great Scots makers – makers of words – he influenced generations of later writers, but what do we know of him?

Barbour was probably born between 1325 and 1335, possibly in the North East – although there are also claims he came from Ayrshire.

The patronage of Robert Stewart, then Guardian of Scotland, directed his career. His first role for Robert may have been as a diplomat at Avignon in 1354, negotiating the release of David II.

Rewards followed swiftly, within a year he held the precentorship of Dunkeld and was soon promoted to archdeacon of Aberdeen Cathedral.

In 1357 Barbour embarked on a course of study across Europe, visiting England and St Denis in France before going to a French university in 1368.

Robert Stewart became King of Scots in 1371 and Barbour, called to court, probably began *The Bruce*. In 1375 Barbour reappears in Aberdeen where £1 of the burgh's annual revenues were given to Barbour 'for the compilation of the

book of the deeds of the late King Robert the Bruce'.

The composition of this chivalric romance was completed some time before 1388 when Robert II gave him a £10 pension.

Barbour stayed on at Aberdeen and his death is recorded as happening on the March 13, 1395.

The Bruce's most famous passage dwells on the meaning of freedom. Barbour argues that only those who had lost their freedom knew in their heart what thralldom really meant.

*Al Fredome is a noble thing.
Fredome mays man to haiff liking.
Fredome all solace to man giffis,
He levys at es that frely levys.
A noble hart may haiff nane es,
Na ellys nocht that him ples,
Cyff fredome failye, for fre liking,
Is yharnt our all other thing.
Na he that ay has levyt fre
May nocht know weil the properté.
The angyr na the wrechyt dome,
That couplyt to foule thyrdome,
Bot gyff he had assayit it.
Than all perquer he suld it wyt,
And suld think fredome mar to prys.
Than all the gold in world that is.*

GLOSSARY:

es (ease); levys (lives); Na ellys nocht that him ples (Nor aught else that pleases him); liking (decision); yharnt (longed for); May nocht know weil the properté (Cannot well know the properties); na, the wrechyt dome; (no, the miserable fate); thyrdome (thralldom); assayit (experienced); Than all perquer he suld it wyt (Then he would know it perfectly).



■ Barbour's masterpiece is still a best-seller today.



Brooch that holds

Its strategic importance to those who would control Scotland is unique. That's why Stirling Castle has been subject to so many tugs of war between attackers and defenders over the centuries

Perched high on a volcanic rock in the very heart of the kingdom, Stirling Castle commands the landscape for as far as the eye can see. From all directions it is an intimidating sight, occupying what was long regarded as the most strategic point in Scotland.

Whoever controlled Stirling Castle controlled the main artery for traffic travelling up and down, and across the country. Not for nothing was it likened to a 'huge brooch clasp[ing] Highlands and Lowlands together'.

It is virtually certain that a castle has existed on the site for almost 1,000 years, and some historians believe the birth date stretches back much further.

One thing is sure. Had it not been for Stirling Castle, William Wallace and Robert Bruce would not have defeated the English in the famous battles at Stirling Bridge and Bannockburn. And Mel Gibson would never have made *Braveheart*.

The unique strategic importance of Stirling was not lost on Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1746 as his troops returned from their unsuccessful venture into England. The town had

just surrendered to the Jacobite army when their Prince decided to lay siege to the well-defended castle.

But it was an ill advised plan. Some of the Prince's generals warned of disaster when the main siege-works were set up on Gowan Hill, immediately to the north east of the castle.

They said such a position was too close to the fortress's grand battery and the terrain did not lend itself to the building of defensive earthworks.

But in the last few days of January, even though their battery was only partly finished, the impatient Jacobites began their siege under the direction of the Comte Mirabelle de Gourdon. Seizing his chance, the castle's commander General Blakeney took little time to decimate the Prince's artillery with his superior armaments.

And as the Duke of Cumberland's army approached, the Jacobites fled north en route to their final defeat at Culloden just a few months later. It was a historic moment – the last time Stirling Castle, or any mainland British castle for that matter, was put under siege.

Influenced by the same social,

military and political upheavals that mark the vital points of our history, the story of Stirling Castle mirrors in many ways the events that have unravelled at important fortresses in other parts of the country.

Like Edinburgh, it was an irresistible location for a major castle, built atop an impregnable volcanic rock that survived the ravages of the last great ice age. And like Edinburgh, there may have been settlements there in prehistoric times.

Some legends even suggest that Stirling Castle was the actual seat of King Arthur's Camelot. But that's one legend best kept well within the realms of fantasy.

What is more probable is that the rock may have been a stronghold for the Goddodin tribe in the early centuries of the first millennium before control passed to the Angles or Northumbrians, then the Picts, and later the Scots.

It is only in the early years of the 12th century that the first substantial evidence of a castle appears courtesy of Alexander I's dedication and endowment of a chapel, indicating the presence of a well established royal castle, which

Scotland together



William I's Den: where William I may have kept and later Stewart kings certainly did.

was later to be the site of his death in 1124

Stirling's rising importance is documented throughout the next two centuries, but it is most famously known for its central role in the Wars of Independence which erupted towards the end of the 13th century

The wide valley surrounding the castle rock in those days was far removed from the scene which greets visitors today. Drainage and advanced farming methods were still hundreds of years away, and much of central Scotland's landscape was boggy and difficult to negotiate.

The fairer lands round Stirling, and the wooden bridge that crossed the River Forth in the shadow of its castle, was the best route north or south – and a crucially important area for anyone with desires to control the nation.

The English King Edward I became aware of this fact when he briefly visited Stirling in 1291, while arrangements were made for Scots nobles to accept his role as adjudicator of the various contenders for the vacant Scottish throne. And in the subsequent wars, which stretched almost 50 years

from that point, control of Stirling Castle was almost always placed as a priority in any military campaign.

When Edward I returned to crush the Scots in 1296 he found the castle open and abandoned, guarded only by a gatekeeper. But it wasn't long before the Scots returned to claim what they believed was rightfully theirs.

Led bravely the following year by William Wallace and Andrew Murray, the Scottish warriors won their famous victory at Stirling Bridge, slaying most of the English garrison and its constable, Sir Richard Waldegrave, in the process.

The troops had gathered on Abbey Craig, the hill where the magnificent Wallace Monument now stands. To his demand that they should surrender, the English commander John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, received a blunt reply that left little room for interpretation. The Scots were 'not here to make peace', he was told, 'but to do battle to defend ourselves and liberate our kingdom'.

The castle's freedom, though, was short lived. Reinforced, the English returned in 1298 to inflict Wallace's final defeat at Falkirk. The castle was

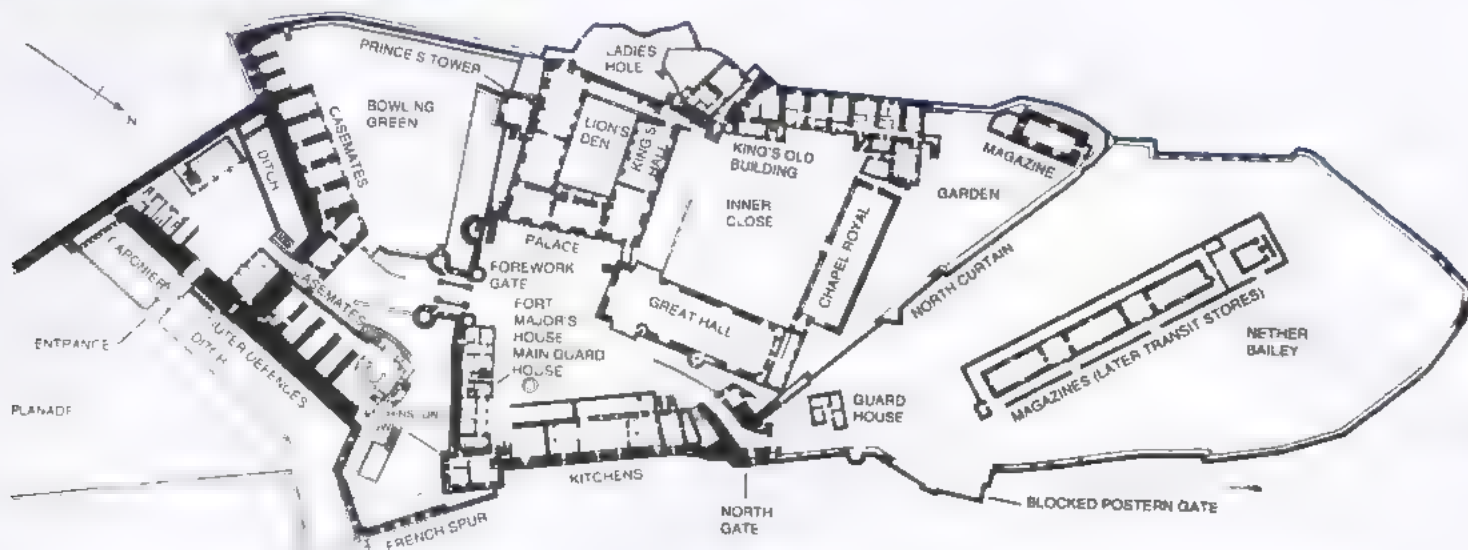
abandoned and Scottish forces were not to be seen on the battlefield again for another 15 years.

Although Scottish soldiers under the leadership of Robert Bruce successfully besieged the castle in 1299, it was once again back in English hands four years later when many of the Scottish nobles had accepted that southern domination of their lands was inevitable.

Edward's tactics on this occasion showed just how much his future success depended on control of Stirling Castle. Before marching north, he had had floating bridges built in Norfolk which allowed him to cross the Forth at a lower point.

Great siege engines accompanied his troops on the march to Stirling, and on July 20 the Scottish garrison under Sir William Oliphant finally succumbed to the bombardment. But Edward was unhappy at the timing of their surrender.

He had yet to use what was thought to be a particularly state-of-the-art siege engine, ominously referred to as the War Wolf, and ordered some of the Scottish forces to remain within the castle walls while the Wolf was unleashed, reputedly with ►



■ A plan of Stirling Castle as it is today. It is virtually certain that a fortress has stood on this strategically important site for a thousand years.

► devastating consequences for the gatehouse and the men behind it. Little wonder that Edward established the nickname Hammer of the Scots. After his death English power in Scotland waned, and by 1313 Stirling was one of only three major Scottish castles still under English control.

Robert Bruce was also now king, bent on regaining such major symbols of the nationhood he was fighting to reinstate. He was furious when his younger brother Edward who had been besieging the castle signed a deal with the garrison commander Sir Philip Mowbray that

Bruce's Bannockburn victory spelled the end for the early castle, as he embarked on a scorched-earth policy to thwart any future foreign occupiers

the castle would be surrendered if it was not relieved by Midsummer's Day, 1314.

The last thing Bruce wanted was a pitched battle, but as Edward II pledged to suppress this 'wicked rebellion', the tone was set for the

battle at Bannockburn, which resulted in Scotland's most famous and decisive military victory.

It also spelled the end for the early castle which stood on Stirling's volcanic rock.

Bruce embarked on a scorched-

earth policy, destroying several of the country's major fortresses, including that of Edinburgh, so that they could never be held against Scotland again.

But they were. Barely 20 years had passed before the English, under Sir Thomas Rokeby, were once again entrenched on the rock at Stirling, erecting new buildings where the old castle had stood.

In 1342, though, they were booted out, and the foundations were put in place for Scotland's monarchs to take Stirling Castle into its most glorious period as the finest royal palace of the realm. ●



■ Peace and tranquillity now reign at Stirling Castle, so often a focus for mayhem and death.



The art of survival

Life was tough for the Medieval peasant. The daily battle to make ends meet was not eased by weather, hunger – or demands of the rich



■ How the other half lived: Ordinary folk survived on barley and ale, while the wealthy indulged themselves with the finest meats and wines.

The merchants of Berwick knew their business. They knew the market in Flanders for good Scots wool, because this was a society which had wool and nothing else – to make clothes, so demand for cloth never fell.

The merchants tried to limit the right of villagers to weave homespun thread into the coarse cloth which would clothe them in their daily tasks, but with little success. So they controlled the quality end of the market where profit margins were greater and oversight easier.

The wool came from the abbeys of Tweeddale and Teviotdale, Galloway and Perthshire abbeys with access to the moors and grazings of the Border hills and Strathmore. Some of the sheep belonged to their tenants and peasants, some to an abbey – but the abbey usually acted as agent, buying wool at a guaranteed price and selling on that clip and its own also at a guaranteed price.

There's a risk in that to the merchant, so the guaranteed price was lower than a market fixed price might have been, but in any case the abbey had probably already borrowed money against the

security of the year's wool crop, so the tenants would have to produce their share or find themselves squeezed out of the grazings.

Indeed, by the year 1300 there wasn't enough land to go round, for the population had been rising irregularly but relentlessly for at least a century. Demand for food could be met only by ploughing up more land and by dividing holdings into smaller and smaller pieces.

There are places today in the Border hills where the wind blows only the short grass and the fleeces of the sheep, but where there were ploughed fields and tenants in the 13th century. Their living must have been hard, the yield of their field small.

Some peasants were rich, like the husbandman with his house and 30 or more acres. Many were poor, like the cottar with five acres and his cot (one-room cottage). But most were desperately poor, seeking work paid for with meal or ale, from landlords and richer peasants. Productivity was low because the wooden plough did not turn a deep furrow, and spade-digging, while better, was desperately slow. If the peasant had no need

to fear global warming, he had every reason to be afraid of the weather, for a rainy summer could leave the hay mouldering in stacks, the oats rotting in sheaves in the field.

Combine harvesters which dry the grain as it is cut have made the sun-and-wind drying which was still the rule till the 1940s a thing of the past. Our seed-corn yields 15-fold – and that is five times more than 50 years ago, and 10 times more than in the 13th century, when grain sown would produce four or five at most, of which next year's seed, a half grain was the church's teind (tenth), and another might go as rent.

The main crops were oats and barley, for wheat was a luxury grain grown for the bread of the rich. Peasants lived on porridge or gruel, with occasional fish or cheese when there was paid work on the landlord's fields. Their diet, ill-balanced with too much protein and little consumption of peas, kale or fruit, was washed down by water or ale, which demanded that the barley grown in the field was brewed by the wife.

Work, too, was demanded for the peasant's land. Ploughing, mowing, harvesting on the lord's



Main crops were oats and barley... wheat was a luxury grain for the bread of the rich

easily broken and leather often had to serve in its place – as door hinges, for example.

We think of dishes as china or pottery, and there were indeed potters at work where clay was accessible

They rarely worked in towns because of the fire danger from their kilns. Pottery was expensive and fragile, so a dish might be made of pewter, containing lethal amounts of lead. The peasant would use neither metal nor pottery.

His pot would be of leather, hardened over the fire. His bottle was made of leather. His cloak, his shoes, everywhere that strength and flexibility were needed, you would find leather

In the 13th century each district, each village, relied on its own fields.

There was a grain market but it was local, for the cost of transport by pack beasts, on tracks which could scarcely be called roads, was prohibitive. So the market operated haphazardly and inadequately.

Scarcity sent prices up but did not draw in outside supplies except near big towns.

Two wet summers spelled disaster – starving families, deaths of infants and the old first, active adults thereafter.

Despite that, pressure on the land from rising population did not abate until the first half of the 14th century when, in 1349, the Black Death began to take its relentless toll ●

fields took one or more days weekly, more at harvest time. Some might be required to hump coals from Berwick to the abbey, peat from the moss to the castle, or a skin of wine from the port to the lord

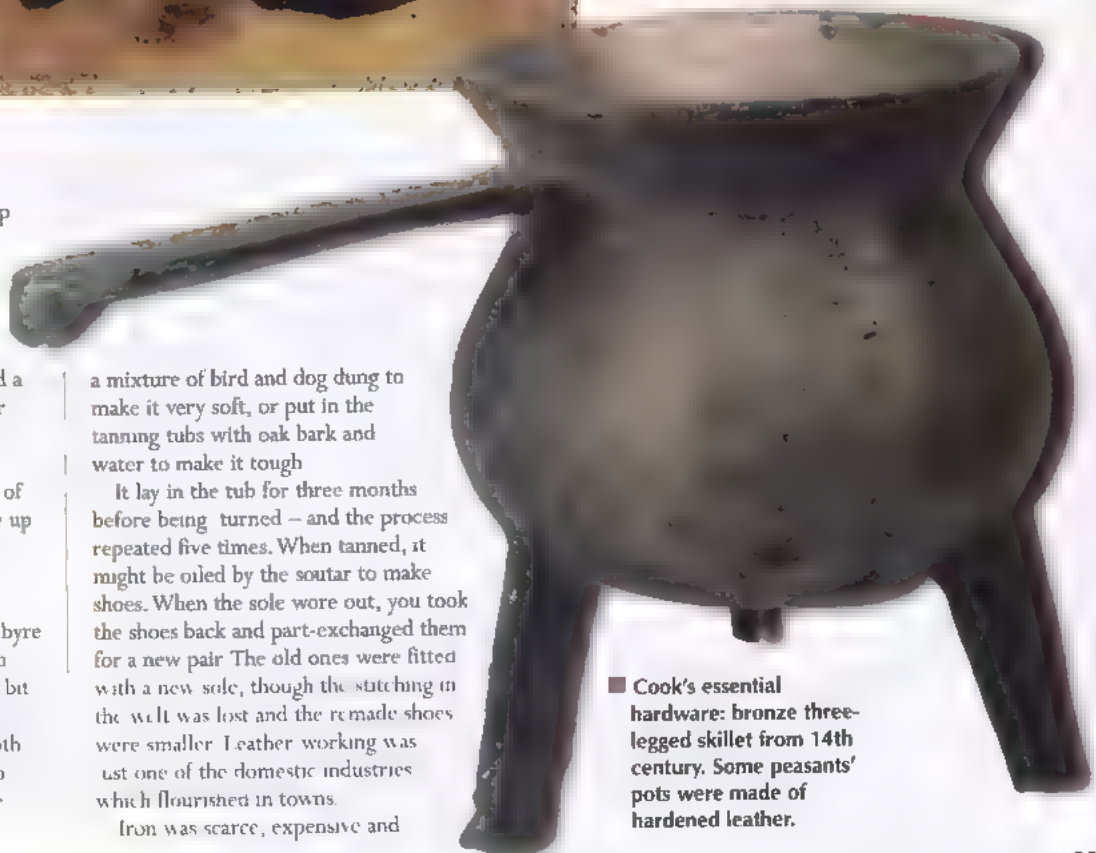
Fuel was needed regularly because abbey and castle had a room warmed by coals and peat. Wine, mostly brought from Gascony, had a life of at most a year before turning to vinegar and was an alternative to ale only for the rich man or abbey.

Of course some peasants would have cattle of their own to put on the grazings, and to make up the team to pull plough and harrow. The cow would yield milk, and when she ceased to be productive would be sold to a flesher for half what she would fetch in milk. In the flesher's byre her throat was slit and the carcass divided into meat, brains, hide, hoof and horn, with every bit put to use. The hide would have to be treated almost as quickly as the meat was sold, for both would soon rot. It had to be soaked in lime to loosen hair and outer skin, scraped to remove these and any scraps of flesh, rubbed with

a mixture of bird and dog dung to make it very soft, or put in the tanning tubs with oak bark and water to make it tough

It lay in the tub for three months before being turned – and the process repeated five times. When tanned, it might be oiled by the souter to make shoes. When the sole wore out, you took the shoes back and part-exchanged them for a new pair. The old ones were fitted with a new sole, though the stitching in the welt was lost and the remade shoes were smaller. Leather working was just one of the domestic industries which flourished in towns.

Iron was scarce, expensive and



■ Cook's essential hardware: bronze three-legged skillet from 14th century. Some peasants' pots were made of hardened leather.

Facing the truth of a warrior

■ How most of us see Robert Bruce: Angus McFadyen portrayed the king in *Braveheart*.

Scotland's hero-king was no Hollywood idol. His face was ravaged with leprosy, age and injuries. But it was Churchillian, too, says the man who has now rebuilt it

Every Scot has heard of Robert Bruce, the nation's most famous hero-king. But we've never been absolutely certain of his facial features. Though the famous Bannockburn statue by Charles Pilkington Jackson must be fairly near, most of us have tended to think of the bearded *Braveheart* star Angus McFadyen when asked to imagine the victor of 1314.

Until now, that is. Using the kind of techniques police rely on to identify decomposing bodies, an expert in facial reconstruction produced a model of how the Bruce would have looked when he died in 1329 at the age of 55.

Dr Iain Macleod, a consultant in oral medicine at the Edinburgh Dental Institute, believes King Robert's face would have been ravaged by the effects of years of disease and battle wounds, and his resulting 'warts and all' portrait has stirred substantial debate. The remarkable project would never have got off the ground in the first place had it not been for an inquisitive young artist, William Scouler, who attended when the king's skull was unearthed during excavations at Dunfermline Abbey in 1817.

Originally commissioned just to draw the skeleton, Scouler produced a magnificent plaster cast of the skull, and for the best part of the last 200 years it has been on display in the anatomy department of Edinburgh University.

The cast was the basis for all Dr Macleod's work. First he produced a 'silhouette' head which police sometimes use to help solve cases involving decomposed bodies. Then, with the help of one of Britain's foremost forensic medical artists Dr Richard Neave, he produced the 'warts and all' terracotta figure of Bruce, scarred by the consequences of battle and years of leprosy. A third computerised image was produced in Glasgow.

These remarkable techniques have helped to identify victims of crime and brought us almost literally face to face with our ancestors. Because facial skin tissues vary little between individuals, it is possible to build up an accurate profile based on a skull's contours.

Dr Macleod's model fitted when superimposed with the few other images that exist of Robert Bruce — such as the 1496 reconstruction of the hero in his youth by Newcastle-based forensic and dental expert Brian Hill.

The only difference was the extensive disfigurement to

■ Bruce's Bannockburn statue (right) represented an early facial reconstruction by sculptor Charles Pilkington Jackson who used the cast of the king's skull (far right).

Bruce's face. Dr Macleod explains: "These guys were fighters. They were not Mel Gibson. The film industry has a lot to answer for. It portrays these men as glamorous figures with perfect sets of gleaming white teeth.

"Of course, the reality is rather different. Their faces would have been scarred by battle injuries which they would have worn like badges of honour."

When Bruce died he would have looked old beyond his years, the possessor of a face that had seen and experienced the harshest and most painful of experiences. The battlefield and countless feuds had taken their toll. A large scar from a sword wound to his head was still clearly evident, as was the disfigurement caused by a broken cheekbone. One eye socket was distended and enlarged, and his upper lip drooped after he lost some of his teeth, most probably in battle.

Like many others, Dr Macleod is also convinced that Bruce spent much of his life

fighting leprosy. It burrowed relentlessly into his skin, and his nose thickened and collapsed with the loss of a cartilage. To what extent the leprosy affected the king's lifestyle, and his ability to rule, is a matter of debate. But after completing the facial reconstruction, Dr Macleod feels it would be wide of the mark to conclude that our most famous ruler was also a king in the ugly stakes.

"The first thing that strikes you about Robert the Bruce is that the guy has tremendous presence," he says. "There's almost a Churchillian aura about him. This is a guy who you would not want to get into a fight with. He would have stood out from the crowd. What we have got here is a battle-scarred old man. You don't go through

Wars like he did without receiving a few knocks."

We now know what Bruce would have looked like when he died. If Dr Macleod has his way, we will soon know how he would have appeared in the prime of his life. Another facial reconstruction is planned, this time providing a glimpse of the Bruce as he would have looked on the battlefield at Bannockburn. Dr Macleod hopes that a bronzed version of this reconstruction will be put on show in the National Museum in Edinburgh.

"The way the face ages is pretty well recognised," says Dr Macleod. "These days you can see projections of how people will look when they are older. We also have the ability to take the years off reasonably easily." ●



■ Both based on Scouler's cast: younger version of Bruce's face by Brian Hill (1996).

■ Battle-scarred old man: the newer, more realistic Macleod model.

ADRIFT IN LAND OF DESOLATION



■ The Baffin Fair: When 1,000 whalers were shipwrecked on the ice in 1830, they raided the ships' liquor casks and went on a drinking binge.

They danced and drank to kill their depression, but many whalersmen who set out from Scotland in search of riches from the ice-clogged sea came home broken and disappointed. And others didn't come home at all

They called it the Land of Desolation... a 'storehouse of storms' a fearful place where towering icebergs thrust long fingers into the sky and great lumps of rock reached up 'like uplifted hands of drowning men'. Here, the whalers lay in their bunks and listened to the terrifying sound of the ice packs closing in. They fought starvation and disease, lost limbs and sometimes their lives, and saw their dreams of new-found wealth drift away on the ice.

There was ice aplenty in Melville Bay, a fearsome stretch of water in the Davis Straits, and dozens of ships fell victim to it. The whalersmen called it the 'Breaking Up Yard' and when they sailed through it they kept a bundle of clothing to hand in case they had to abandon ship.

It was there that 1,000 shipwrecked whalersmen took to the ice in 1830, living in tents or under whaleboats. To counter their depression, they raided liquor casks of stricken vessels and began a drinking binge... now known as 'the Baffin Fair'.

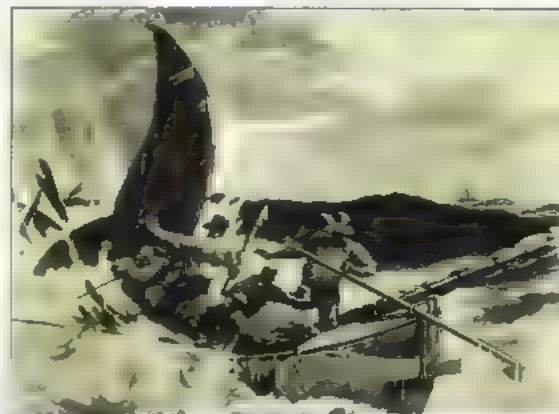
The year 1830 ran like a black scar through the history of whaling. Out of 91 British ships in the Davis Straits, 19 were lost and 11 of these were Scots from Aberdeen, Peterhead, Dundee, Leith and Greenock. The people of the Orcadian port of Stromness - the main jumping off point for British whalers - wept at the sight of tattered survivors coming ashore from broken whalers.

The diaries of men like William Elder, mate of the *Viewforth* of Kirkcaldy, told of unbearable human misery. He described what happened in the winter of 1835-36 when his ship drifted

southwards and became trapped in the ice. Men were reduced to living skeletons, a seaman watched his feet fall off from frostbite, and men's teeth fell out because of scurvy.

Yet amid the despair Elder also recorded his awe at the terrible beauty of this frozen world - 'huge mountains, twisted into a thousand fantastic forms'. The 'fearsome night' weighed heavily on him, but the moon would come up, 'a welcome messenger to cheer our darkened paths'. He wondered if he would ever see his own fireside again - and wept. "Sad, sad thoughts," he wrote. His ship arrived in Stromness on February 14, 1836, with 14 dead men on board and only seven able to work the vessel. Elder was one of the survivors.

By the end of August that year most of the whalers had set sail for home, but six ships



■ Moment of truth: When the whale and the whalersmen were locked in mortal combat.



■ The birth of the steamship-whaler got off to a shaky start when Peterhead's pioneering vessel sank on her first trip. But the iron ship's day was near.

lingered on the Dee, of Aberdeen, the Thomas and Advice from Dundee, and three English vessels, the Norfolk of Berwick, the Grenville Bay of Shields, and the Swan of Hull. By the first week of September all six were trapped in an impenetrable field of ice. They huddled together as close as possible, but the Swan became separated and drifted so far north that nobody knew what had happened to her.

By November 12, the Thomas was listing so badly that the men had to crawl across the deck on their hands and knees. Next morning she was a total wreck. With food running out, men from the Dee spent three days recovering provisions from her. The Dee's master imposed strict rationing, but hunger drove some men to fry and eat tails of whales caught on an earlier voyage.

However, even the whale-eaters weren't able to avoid what crewman David Gibb called 'the death monster scurvy'. The disease claimed its first victim on January 11.

The Dee's captain died on February 3, as the gale-lashed whaler drifted south. By the time she and two of the English ships had broken free of the ice and anchored at Stromness a month later, death had claimed 46 men on board.

When the Dee entered Aberdeen Harbour on May 5, the quay was crowded with people. "Weeping widows rushed on board with their helpless orphans in their arms," reported the Aberdeen Herald, "while parents and friends followed in equal grief." They frantically searched the ship for familiar faces, but all that they found were empty hammocks.

The tragedy of the Dee was a reminder that there was a grim price to pay for 'a ship fu' o' oil and money to our name'.

It seemed a new, safer era was dawning in 1859, however, when Peterhead acquired an iron vessel, the Empress of India, which promised to

cut through the Arctic ice like a cleaver. But she failed to live up to expectations. The first piece of heavy ice she ran into stove in her port bow and she sank within four hours. Her crew was saved by the wooden ships she was meant to replace.

That same year another ship was launched that pointed the way to the future - the Narwhal, the first auxiliary steam-powered whaler to be built in Dundee. She was to set a pattern that made the city the premier whaling port in Britain.

The Narwhal was followed by the Dundee, also in 1859, the Camperdown in 1860, and the Polynia in 1861. Dundee needed whale oil for its expanding jute industry and by 1867 there were 12 whale ships in the Dundee fleet.

Among the whaling masters who sailed on them was Captain Tom Robertson, better known as 'Coffee Tam' because he wouldn't allow alcohol on his ship. Tam, from Peterhead, commanded the Balaena and took her to Franz Josef Land to hunt walrus, whose hides were in demand for bicycle-making.

'Coffee Tam' banned strong drink on his ship, but Captain Charles Yule thought there was something worse - strong language. "By the pipes of war," he declared, "I am here to do my duty and I am going to see that you are helped to do yours!" His 'pipes of war' declaration was the nearest this disciplinarian got to swearing.

He took over the newly built whaler Esquimaux and made his first trip to the Arctic in 1866. Although he caught only one whale in his first year, he had the satisfaction of knowing that most of the Dundee fleet had come home empty.

After that, Captain Yule showed that he could outpace any of the veterans in Dundee's whaling fleet. He caught 7,000 seals in a six week trip then went on to the Davis Straits and made one of the best catches of the season - nine whales.

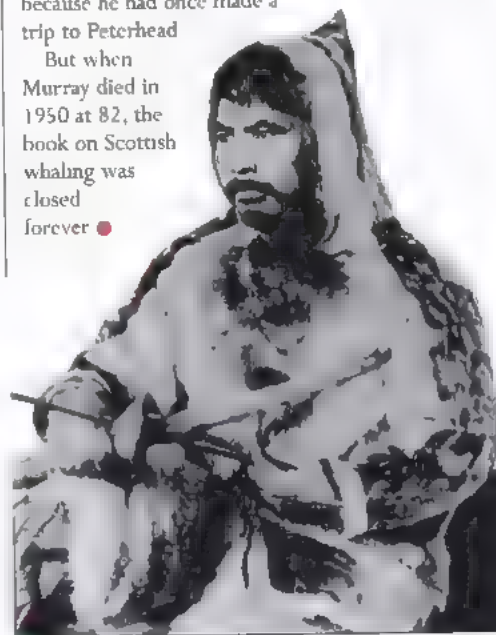
But the old century was dying and Arctic whaling was dying with it. Four Dundee vessels

caught seven whales in 1911, compared with 48 in 1881. In the same year, six whalers caught 2,615 seals compared with 152,706 three decades earlier.

Last of the Scottish whaling masters was John Murray, of Peterhead, who in 1908 followed 'Coffee Tam' to Greenland and came back with a good catch. But just before the First World War, he registered a complete failure on one trip - not a single whale was seen. "The last of the Dundee whaling," he said.

Still, he had time for an adventure or two. One of his voyages was to Ushualloo, north of Kekerten, where the eskimos laid on a great feast in his honour. The women played melodeons and an old eskimo claimed he had Scottish nationality because he had once made a trip to Peterhead.

But when Murray died in 1950 at 82, the book on Scottish whaling was closed forever. ■



■ The last of the Scottish whaling masters got a great eskimo welcome of feasting and music.



■ Watson-Watt: No to the death ray.

Could the Battle of Britain – or even the war itself – have been won without radar? Probably not, but its inventor has never been given the credit

Sir Robert Watson Watt was the brilliant and determined Scot who did almost as much as Winston Churchill to save Britain during its darkest hour – but his work was so secret he has never fully achieved the public recognition he deserves

He was the pioneer of radar, the ingenious invention which helped to win the Battle of Britain and to keep the country free from occupation and defeat by the Nazis

The contribution of Watson Watt's invention to modern society was immense. It played a major part in winning the Second World War for the allies, and without it the development of modern aviation and shipping would have been unthinkable

He was a direct descendant of James Watt, who revolutionised the steam engine and was one of the most famous Scots of all time. Watson Watt was born in Brechin in 1892 and went to University College, Dundee, which at the time was part of

St Andrews University, to study engineering. After a spell teaching physics at the university, he joined the Meteorological Office of the new Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough. Initially, he wasn't too keen on the job, because he felt the study of the weather was far removed from the heavy engineering which was his first love

But when he took the post, he quickly found himself enjoying the work – which involved applying his knowledge of radio to locate thunderstorms to provide an early warning of bad

The man who 'saw' by radio

weather conditions for airmen. He carried out detailed work into atmospheric conditions, and discovered by listening carefully to BBC broadcasts that these could influence radio signals from as much as 4,000 miles away

He travelled the world to prove some of his conclusions before receiving a bizarre request from the government in 1935. Could he invent a death ray of the type often seen in science fiction films? The government wanted to deploy such a weapon against enemy aircraft. Watson-Watt pointed out that it was physically impossible

However, he didn't quite let the idea drop. Spinning the project round in his mind, he decided there was a good chance of using a 'ray' to do something different, but equally vital – find the position of enemy aircraft

This form of radio location, he said, could even be used through clouds and darkness. He made the suggestion to take some sting out of his report dismissing the death ray, but the government became interested and asked for more details

Watson-Watt obliged. He worked on the principle that if it were possible to reflect a radio signal off a distant object – such as an aircraft – the distance to that object could be easily calculated, since radio waves always travel at the speed of light. So the position of the aircraft in the sky, together with its direction, could be worked out

Trials started, using the BBC's short wave transmitters at Daventry in the Midlands. Watson Watt managed to get a signal to bounce back over eight miles. It became clear that, once refined, the new device was going to work

The project now demanded total secrecy. In 1935 the development team moved to a remote part of the Suffolk coast, where, under Watson Watt's guidance, they ironed out many problems. They represented the radio wave as a beam on a cathode ray tube, with objects in the sky showing up as blips on a screen

It was decided to set up five radio location stations on England's south coast as an insurance policy against an attack by Germany. We were still not at war, but the threat from Hitler was growing by the day and contingency plans were being put into effect. By now radar was effective over a distance of 75 miles – far

enough to reach across the Channel into France and give early warning of enemy attacks

Plans were made for another 20 stations, and the new system was refined further so it could direct searchlights on to aircraft before the light was switched on – so dazzling the pilots. It also allowed aircraft to locate enemy shipping

The one thing which no-one knew was how far advanced the Germans were with their own system. Watson-Watt himself volunteered to go there, posing as a tourist, to find out

Acting undercover, he scoured the country and found, to everyone's relief, that there was no evidence the Nazis had even started to develop a similar invention

When war did break out, the new invention turned out to be of inestimable value in fighting off German attacks. Watson-Watt called it Radio Detection and Ranging – or RADAR for short

By alerting the RAF to incoming Luftwaffe attacks, the system played a hugely important part in winning the Battle of Britain. In its favour, Radar also played a huge part when the Luftwaffe switched to night bombing attacks, helping to bring down dozens of German aircraft

Watson Watt was a hero, but because of the conditions of secrecy prevailing during the war he could not claim any credit for his work

He was awarded a knighthood in 1942, however, and the government gave him £52,000 in recognition of the importance of his wartime work. He retired to Inverness, where he died in 1957



■ Today's radar transmitters can be massive and sophisticated but owe everything to Watson-Watt's original brainwave.



■ Henry Bell: Builder of the steam ferry Comet.

WORLD WARMED TO HIS COOL IDEA

Sir James Dewar was an industrial chemist whose claim to fame lies not in his complex experiments, but in an ordinary household object he invented almost accidentally along the way – the vacuum flask.

Born at Kincardine-on-Forth in 1842, Dewar was a student and lecturer at Edinburgh University before – like so many other Scots scientists and engineers – moving south to carry on his work.

He experimented on the liquefaction of gases – including hydrogen, nitrogen and oxygen – at low temperatures.

It was in 1872 that he invented the vacuum flask. He actually designed it purely for the scientific purpose of storing his gases at a low enough temperature to keep them liquid.

But his glass-blower, Reinhold Burger, found that it kept liquids warm as well as cold.

Dewar became Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institution in London. In 1899, he managed to liquefy hydrogen and the following year solidified it.

He is also famous for helping to invent cordite, the smokeless explosive.

Dewar was knighted for his achievements in 1904, and died in 1923.

There is no doubt that his scientific discoveries were huge – but not as great as inventing the humble vessel we use every time we enjoy a cuppa on a picnic.

Steamship pioneer who sent us 'doon the watter'

In a way, Henry Bell can be regarded as the father of the Clyde – for he pioneered the modern steamship by building his famous vessel, the Comet. Bell was born in Linlithgow in 1767, and was an apprentice millwright before moving south to London to serve under the famous Scots engineer John Rennie.

When he decided to travel back to Scotland, Bell continued his studies while also working as a carpenter.

At the same time, he went into business, buying a hotel in Helensburgh and becoming the town's Provost.

It was the entrepreneurial side of his brain that obviously inspired the inventive side. It struck him that if he could build a ship to bring holidaymakers from Glasgow down the river, he could then accommodate them at his hotel.

Using his engineering skills, he planned to construct a ship called the Comet – after a comet which had appeared in the skies in 1811 – for this purpose.

Putting his bold idea into action, he built the 28-ton, four-horsepower vessel at Port Glasgow.

It was the first-ever commercial steamship and must have caused a sensation on its three-and-a-half-hour maiden voyage from Glasgow to Gourock in 1812, its double paddles churning and the distinctive outline of high smokestack and single sail set against the skyline.

The vessel plied between Glasgow and Helensburgh with its customers, and Bell quickly realised that its potential was huge.

He began to use it to make tours to the Kyles of Bute

He built the mother of all Scottish ferries to attract visitors to his new hotel

and the Crinan Canal – the first steamship operator to make trips 'doon the watter'!

Bell went on to build other vessels, even going as far as to steam between Glasgow and Inverness via the Caledonian Canal. In fact, his vessels were actually the forerunners of the Caledonian MacBrayne ships which now provide most of Scotland's ferry services.

Henry Bell had not managed to build and design the Comet alone – engineer John Robertson built her engine, while the famous marine engineer David Napier was responsible for her boiler. But as Bell had commissioned the Comet, his name became forever linked with it.

Thanks to the impressive speed of its construction, the Comet was responsible for quite a sea change in Scottish shipbuilding techniques. It was so successful that within little more than 10 years, Clyde yards had produced no fewer than 95 steamships.

Henry Bell's little vessel undoubtedly helped to make the Clyde one of the world's greatest shipbuilding rivers.

He died in 1830, but an important part of the Comet still survives – its flywheel can still be seen in Helensburgh's Hermitage Park.



■ The death of a great team: Eight 'Busby Babes' were among the 23 people who died when their plane crashed on take-off after refuelling at Munich.

How brave Sir Matt defeated tragedy

Manchester United's Scots boss lost his 'Babes' in an air disaster but battled on to soccer triumph

When Sir Matt Busby was laid to rest in a rainswept Manchester cemetery at the age of 84, no-one disputed that the distinguished Scot from Bellshill had been the greatest, most sage British football manager of all time. More than 10,000 mourners lined the streets and Manchester, or a large part of it, stood still in a reverent farewell.

Busby could not only conjure up brilliance. He proved he could deal gallantly with tragedy. Other managers might have won more trophies, but none had created three dream teams or shown, as he did, the iron grit to work on after one of them was virtually wiped out by a plane crash.

Busby's Manchester United – 'the Busby Babes' – had been on a refuelling stop at Munich after playing Red Star Belgrade when tragedy struck. On its third take-off attempt, their Elizabethan plane skidded off the snow-covered runway and careered 250 yards through a perimeter fence

■ Time stands still: the clock at Old Trafford that will never forget.

into a house. In that bleak and terrible field 23 perished, eight of them talented young footballers he treated like his own sons.

The loss of Roger Byrne, Tommy Taylor, Duncan Edwards, Eddie Coleman, Mark Jones, Bill Whelan, Geoff Bent and David Pegg was a blow which nearly broke Busby's inner discipline and steely strength.

He suffered appalling injuries himself at that fateful moment on February 6, 1958. In fact, it was a miracle that he survived and at first he had doubts about returning to Old Trafford, United's legendary home. But as he recovered, his wife Jean encouraged him to keep going in the job at the place he adored.

His connections with the Manchester club went back a long way – to 1945, in fact, when he





■ Memories: the late Sir Matt holds a picture of his young team (left) boarding their fateful flight. The crash also severely injured Sir Matt himself (above).

agreed to be United's team manager while still a 34-year-old about to be demobbed from the Army. His starting pay was £15 a week – which, even allowing for inflation, contrasts sharply with the £50,000 a week earned by some top footballers 50 years later.

Busby told the directors then that he would accept no interference in his managing of the team, but he needn't have worried on that score. Success made a free hand doubly certain.

Old Trafford was a bombed-out shell when Matt Busby swapped his sergeant major's uniform for a track suit. He set about an all-round rebuilding exercise. As the players were his main concern, he was thankful that he had inherited some genuine stars – and that, like himself, Irish skipper Johnny Carey was a born leader.

Among others, he bought Celtic's Jimmy Delaney for £4,000 (and sold him after six years for £3,500). His players, including Delaney, were

nearly all internationalists, and Busby himself had been Scotland's war-time soccer captain.

In 1949 and 1950 this strong side began to wilt, so Busby countered by promoting Roger Byrne from the reserves and signing Johnny Berry from Birmingham City. The result was the winning of United's first title in 40 years.

The next season, though, they slumped to eighth place – so the second team with the 'Busby Babes' label took shape. The manager realised, as he walked in deep thought over a golf course, that the time had come to put his carefully-considered youth plan into action.

First, he bought Tommy Taylor from Barnsley for £29,999. The odd price was to avoid being the first to spend £30,000.

More importantly, he introduced the legendary wing-half Duncan Edwards from the reserves and several others followed. Among the string of starlets was Bobby Charlton. It was this sparkling team that had fought its way up to the quarter finals of the European cup and just drawn 3-3 with Red Star for a 5-4 aggregate victory when the air tragedy occurred.

In the aftermath of the crash, assistant manager Jimmy Murphy held the fort as the injured Busby lay in hospital.

Just 13 days after the tragedy United played Sheffield Wednesday in the fourth round of the FA Cup. Air-crash survivors Harry Gregg, Bobby Charlton and Bill Foulkes lined up with a host of youngsters – and United won 3-0.

They progressed all the way to Wembley but, despite the presence of their boss on crutches, they lost 2-0 to a Nat Lofthouse-inspired Bolton Wanderers.

However, in 1963 United gave

formal notice that they were back in business – by beating Leicester in the FA Cup Final. A third dream team was emerging.

The Busby courage was also shining through again and normality had very nearly returned to Old Trafford. In 1965 and 1967 they won the League, and then next season followed Celtic as European Cup winners by beating Benfica 4-1.

George Best and Pat Crerand were key men in the team (Denis Law was injured and didn't take part). Winning the European Cup – the first English club to do it – represented the pinnacle of Sir Matt's achievements. The history-making side was: Stepney, Brennan, Dunne, Crerand, Foulkes, Stiles, Best, Kidd, Charlton, Sadler and Aston.

At the end of 1969, Busby retired as manager, though he returned briefly after the departure of his successor, Wilf McGuinness.

No club was ever better served by any individual, so it was no surprise that Matt Busby was made a United director and president.

He had come along way from his humble roots in Scotland. Although after leaving junior club Denny Hibs his football career was in England with Manchester City, Liverpool and United, Matt Busby never lost his broad Scots accent.

Born at Bellshill, Lanarkshire, in 1909 he made his debut for City at Maine Road in November, 1929. He was in one of City's greatest half-back lines of Busby, Cowan and Bray and played more than 200 matches for them.

He twice played for City in the FA Cup final at Wembley – in 1933, when they lost 3-0 to Everton, and the following year when they beat Portsmouth 2-1.

Matt Busby was transferred to Liverpool in 1936 for £8,000 and was technically still their player when he came home from the war to join United. But clearly his mind and spirit were always with the Old Trafford Club. And the feeling was reciprocated...

He is remembered by a road near Old Trafford which has been renamed Sir Matt Busby Way. ●



■ Rebuilt: Sir Matt with his 1968 European Cup winning team.

The fearsome powers behind Bruce's throne



■ The tomb of James Douglas – who took the king's heart on a crusade – at St Brides Church in Douglas, Lanarkshire.



Biker historian David R Ross looks at all the king's top men and what became of them

After Bannockburn in 1314, Robert Bruce, King of Scots, became known by the epithet 'First Knight of Christendom' throughout Europe. But, of course, the devastating run of victories was not just down to Bruce himself – he had some exceptional captains.

There was Keith the Marischal, the captain of cavalry; there was Walter, his High Steward; and Edward, King Robert's brother, was a dashing leader. But shining above even these were James Douglas and Thomas Randolph, two of the finest commanders of men Scotland has ever produced.

After Bannockburn, where both had excelled, they became the scourge of Northern England, crossing and recrossing the Border on hit-and-run raids to try to force England to the negotiating table.

At Myton-on-Swale, north-west of York, these two annihilated an English army composed largely of churchmen. Later the Scots would derisively call this episode 'The chapter of Myton' because of the amount of clergy among the slain.

The field where this encounter took place can still be visited. Crossing the old bridge over the River Swale at Myton takes you on to the ground

where the English were forced back against the river.

Randolph was one of the commanders of Bruce's army of invasion into Ireland, his level-headedness proving its worth again and again during this campaign.

Bruce joined Randolph and Douglas at the Battle of Byland in 1322, when the Scots fought their way up the steep gradient of Sutton Bank in the Hambleton Hills, on the line of the modern A170 road, smashing their way through the English lines, and almost capturing Edward II of England, who was in residence at Rievaulx Abbey at the time. The imposing ruins of Rievaulx still stand, a little north of the village of Helmsley on the A170.

When Edward III came to the throne of England in 1327, he carried on with the tired old 'Lord Paramount of Scotland' argument, and prepared to renew the war with Scotland.

Bruce again sent Douglas and Randolph south. Edward III confronted them at Stanhope on the River Wear in County Durham, and asked them to renege on their strong position on the hillside and come down and fight.

Douglas and Randolph replied: "We are deep in your country of England. We have burnt and wasted it, and if you

do not like it come and dislodge us, because we are very pleased where we are."

Douglas launched a night raid into the English camp, the Scots stabbing the sleeping English troops with their spears, crying: "Douglas, Douglas, you shall all die Lords of England!"

Before the English could retaliate, the Scots slipped away. Edward III wept tears of frustration at his inability to bring Douglas and Randolph to battle.

Their attacks were responsible for the English King signing the peace treaty in 1328.

After Bruce's death Douglas carried his heart on crusade, eventually dying in battle in Teba in Andalusia, Spain, in 1330.

He is buried in the Church of St. Brides in Douglas, Lanarkshire.

Randolph became the guardian of Scotland during the minority of Bruce's son, but he did not long outlive Douglas. Randolph died in Musselburgh. The inhabitants stood guard around the house where he lay ill until news of his death was announced, and ever since Musselburgh has been known as the 'Honest Toon'.

Randolph was buried in Dunfermline Abbey, but unfortunately no trace of his tomb now remains. ●

Scotland's Story

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